

February 27, 2022

Testimony Regarding An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record

Dear Co-Chair Senator Robyn Porter, Co-Chair Senator Julie Kushner, and Esteemed Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

I am writing to ask you to **support** legislation that would codify into law the proposed actions put forth in the bill before your Labor and Public Employees Committee known as **An Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record**.

Some laws on our books may have made sense at some time in the past. I appreciate the position you are in to review these laws and bring them into agreement with the living reality of our citizens today. I am asking you to nullify the outdated notion that a person who has a criminal record is someone who needs to carry their punishment beyond the date of their release from the justice system, and indeed, to the end of their lives.

I am asking you to enact legislation that allows people with a criminal record to apply for employment without discrimination in hiring by means of:

1. Requiring all employers to consider the person with the criminal history who is in front of them, and assess whether or not that applicant's crime is in any way related to the job they are now seeking. If the crime is unrelated to the position being sought, to give the applicant a fair chance at being hired.
2. Prohibiting non-governmental employers from placing a ban on hiring any individual with a criminal record. This is particularly important because our criminal justice system disproportionately incarcerates and punishes Black and Latinx people. A blanket ban on hiring people with a criminal record is a handy way to further harm people of color looking to create a self-sustaining life through independent employment.
3. Protecting employers from unintended negative consequences of hiring a formerly incarcerated person through safe harbor provisions.
4. Establishing a Council to review the current laws on our books regarding collateral consequences as they pertain to occupational licensing, and remove those that no longer reflect fairness.

I am grateful to you for your consideration of the proposals being put forth in this bill. I appreciate the work you are doing to make Connecticut a fairer place for all of us in which to live and work.

With respect and gratitude,

Ann T. Percival
26 Douglas Drive